



**CONGRESSMAN CURT WELDON**

*7th District Pennsylvania*



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**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CURT WELDON  
CHAIRMAN, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE  
HEARING ON DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MODERNIZATION PLAN**

*October 8, 1998*

The purpose of today's hearing is to preview the modernization issues that will face the Military Procurement Subcommittee and the Research and Development Subcommittee in the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Recent testimony by senior DOD representatives, both civilian and uniformed military, and by former uniformed service chiefs, has begun to substantiate the deep concerns of members of this committee that defense modernization is seriously underfunded.

Dr. Gansler's recent remarks to the Association of the United States Army concerning the modernization "death spiral" are a painful but welcome recognition of a serious problem that needs to be addressed. We will be very interested today in his views and those of our other witnesses regarding the procurement and research and development issues facing the modernization program, and what will be required to break out of the "death spiral" that severely affects our ability to modernize our forces for the future.

While much of the focus of the recent revelations cites specific procurement shortfalls and procurement "bow wave" problems caused by stretched and delayed military procurement programs, members should also be concerned about the lack of discussion of the serious decline in R&D investments. The National Defense Panel (NDP) assessment of the Department's Quadrennial Defense Review clearly stated a need for a plan to leverage technology and begin to modernize with new, more capable, leap-ahead military equipment to maximize the combat power of our smaller, more streamlined forces.

Yet, the question most in need of an answer is — How can we embark on any long range strategy for real improvements in the modernization of our forces with a research and development budget which has been projected by DOD to decline by at least 14% over the next five years?

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With the painfully evident, steady decline in the service science and technology accounts, how can we expect to provide the “seed corn” of advanced technology that will be necessary to enhance the effectiveness of our armed forces on future battlefields. What measures must be taken? What priorities must be established by the military departments, the defense agencies, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense?

While the current host of concerns addresses the very real shortages evident in defense procurement, what even greater problems are ahead if our research and technology investments do not receive at least equal visibility and importance?

To these and other questions during this hearing, candid answers will help members to understand the significance of the “other area” of modernization and provide a preview of the research and development issues and the procurement issues which must be addressed by the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress when it considers the Fiscal Year 2000 Defense budget request and the budget requests that will follow.